

State of Hawai'i Weekly COVID-19 Cluster Report



October 28, 2021

Over the last few weeks, Hawai'i has been experiencing a downward trend of COVID-19 cases statewide. Many entities have contributed in the efforts to slow the COVID-19 spread, including the **Department of Education** (DOE). Schools within the DOE have embraced the role of both **educators** and **public health facilitators** during the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing mitigation strategies and control measures to protect students and staff. The Hawai'i State Department of Health has valued this partnership in the effort to **decrease the risk of COVID-19 in schools**. The **core strategies** that both DOH and DOE continually endorse include (1) vaccination of eligible students and staff; (2) stay home or go home if sick; (3) correct and consistent mask use indoors; and (4) hand hygiene. Additional **layered mitigation strategies** are also being applied within schools. This aligns with the current guidance provided by the <u>CDC for COVID-19 in K-12 schools</u>. Though the state has been seeing a decrease in cases, vigilance is required to further reduce COVID-19 risk among students and staff in schools. <u>DOH COVID-19 Guidance for Schools</u>

The Hawai'i State Department of Health conducts **routine case investigations** for COVID-19 cases in schools. Cases of COVID-19 are **required to be reported** to DOH by school administration and via electronic laboratory reporting of test results. Case investigators then attempt to contact the case or proxy to gather information regarding their illness and **potential exposures**. Case investigation is **critical** to the public health response for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. This allows state public health officials to **identify potential outbreaks** in schools and respond appropriately. **Cluster investigations** are initiated when multiple students or staff with unknown or suspected school exposure to COVID-19 are reported to DOH. Throughout the cluster investigation, DOH may reach out to the school for more information regarding the cases among students and staff to **provide guidance** or to ensure core mitigation strategies are being utilized and enforced in the **school setting**. DOH defines a school cluster as three or more confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 among students, teachers, or staff within a **specified core group** in a 14-day period, as long as those cases do not have suspected outside exposure (i.e. they are not close contacts of cases outside the school setting). A "core group" includes but is not limited to extracurricular activity, cohort group, classroom, or bus route. As cases of COVID-19 decrease, the number of clusters are also trending downwards.

In August and September 2021, The Hawai'i State Department of Health investigated a **cluster of 30 COVID-19 cases associated with an elementary school on Oahu**. Of the 30 students and staff **in the classroom**, **7 tested positive** for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and one case with COVID-19 symptoms was epidemiologically linked (attack rate: 27%). Twenty-two secondary cases were also identified among household members. There were a total of 6 breakthrough cases; 1 staff member and 5 secondary cases. One secondary case, who was unvaccinated, was hospitalized. The school enforced **multiple mitigation strategies** that help stop the spread of COVID-19, including **mask wearing**, **physical distancing**, and **student**, **faculty**, **and staff screening and testing** on campus. The DOH School Response Team identified **increasing ventilation** in the classrooms as a potential area of improvement. Teachers were reported to be keeping **windows and doors closed** to limit outdoor noise levels, and to maintain the central air conditioning. DOH provided the school with options and guidance that would **improve classroom ventilation**. Implementing techniques to improve airflow in classrooms, in addition to the core essential strategies, adds an **extra layer of protection** to prevent the spread of COVID-19 between students. The findings from this school cluster investigation demonstrate the importance of implementing layered mitigation measures to reduce COVID-19 spread in schools.

Vigilance is still required to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep our communities and keiki safe. Continue to do your part and become part of the solution by getting vaccinated, wearing a mask in indoor public spaces, socially distancing from others by at least 6 feet, moving activities outdoors, and avoiding large gatherings and crowded places. Everyone 12 years and older should get vaccinated to protect themselves and our community. It is also important to remember that COVID-19 symptoms can vary from the classic symptoms of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, or loss of taste or smell to more mild symptoms such as headache, sore throat, congestion, fatigue, muscle or body aches, and runny nose. Therefore, it is critical students and staff stay home when they feel sick and get tested for COVID-19 if experiencing any of the aforementioned symptoms. People can be infectious even without symptoms. By continuing to use these effective measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce community transmission, in-person learning can remain a low-risk setting for students and staff. #HIGotVaccinated

Introduction to the State of Hawai'i Weekly COVID-19 Cluster Report

A disease cluster refers to multiple cases of a disease occurring at one time, in one geographic location, or among people with the same or similar shared exposures. Public health officials investigate and study disease clusters because they can provide important information about how diseases are transmitted between individuals and among groups of people; information which can then be used to identify risk factors, inform official recommendations, design interventions, and implement policies to prevent, mitigate, and stop the spread of that disease in communities.

In Hawai'i, COVID-19 clusters associated with community events, social gatherings, workplaces, and other settings have helped public health officials understand the specific settings where disease transmission is most likely to occur. As our state looks to modify current restrictions on businesses and activities implemented in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Hawai'i State Department of Health is prioritizing not only investigating and analyzing local COVID-19 clusters, but also sharing current cluster information and disseminating key lessons learned to date.

It is important to note that most COVID-19 cases cannot be linked to a specific setting or cluster. Therefore, the total number of cases identified as associated with COVID-19 clusters in Hawai'i will be significantly lower than the overall total number of cases of COVID-19 identified within the State of Hawai'i. The tables below summarize COVID-19 clusters that have been identified through statewide case investigation and contact tracing efforts and are actively under investigation within the State of Hawai'i during the specified reporting week. The same cluster may be included in multiple reports from week to week if a new case has been identified within 14 days of the date the report was finalized.

Definitions for Terms Used in this Report

Because this weekly report focuses on clusters associated with non-household exposures, the definition of a **COVID-19 cluster** employed within this report is as follows:

Three (3) or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) linked to a particular site or event within one incubation period (14 days) *as long as those cases do not have outside exposure to each other* (i.e. they are not household members or close contacts outside the selected location).

** This definition has been updated from two (2) or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 to **three (3)** or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 effective January 1, 2021. This change was made to reduce "noise" related to sporadic cases that may occur in the same setting, especially when community case rates are high, and is reflected in the county-specific tables beginning with the January 21, 2021 report. **

Note: Identifying cases as part of a cluster does not necessarily imply that transmission has occurred in the site or at the event associated with the cluster.

Additional definitions for terms used within this report are outlined below.

Case	Both confirmed and probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), including deaths.			
Confirmed case	A case with confirmatory laboratory evidence.			
Probable case	 Refers to a case: Meeting clinical criteria AND epidemiologic linkage with no confirmatory laboratory testing performed for SARS-CoV-2 OR Meeting presumptive laboratory evidence OR Meeting vital records criteria with no confirmatory laboratory evidence for SARS-CoV-2. 			
Cases associated with the primary setting	Refers to cases linked to a COVID-19 cluster that were directly exposed to the primary site or event.			
Linked cases outside the primary setting	Refers to cases linked to a COVID-19 cluster that were NOT directly exposed to the primary site or event (for example, cases among household contacts of any cases associated with the primary setting).			

Exposure Setting Categories

Exposure Setting Category a	Specific Settings Included in Category b			
Congregate Settings				
Correctional Facilities	Jails, prisons, detention centers, correctional treatment centers / "sober living" centers, transitional correctional facilities or homes / "halfway houses" for adults and adolescents			
Educational Settings	Preschools, K-12, and institutes of higher education, school-based athletics, after school programs			
Shelters	Facilities providing short or long-term sheltering and other social services for individuals and families and groups without access to permanent housing due to homelessness, disaster, emergency, violence, or other circumstances			
F	ood Service, Production, and Distribution			
Bars & Nightclubs	Establishments that are principally engaged in the business of selling alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption			
Food Suppliers	Grocery stores, other food distributors, manufacturers, warehouses, processors, farms, food pantries			
Restaurants	Food service establishments offering either dine-in or take-out services, cafeterias, banquet facilities / private event facilities / private reception venues where food is served			
	Occupational Settings			
Construction & Industrial	Construction and industrial settings, including residential and non-residential construction sites, landscaping companies, shipyards, non-food manufacturers, industrial warehouses, and related sales and distribution centers			
Other Occupational Settings	Offices, retail establishments, first responders			
Travel, Lodging & Tourism	Domestic / international / interisland travel, lodging, cruise ships, other tourism			
Social and Recreational Activities				
Social Gatherings	Parties, group gatherings, weddings, funerals, other social functions			
Places of Worship	Religious services and other events / activities at places of worship			
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^a COVID-19 clusters in long term care and other healthcare settings are summarized in the **State of Hawai'i Weekly COVID-19 Clusters in Healthcare Settings Report.** Additionally, a long-term care table is included in the Disease Outbreak Control Division COVID-19 Operations Report weekly on Wednesdays.

^b Specific settings included in the reference table may not be exhaustive for the category.

COVID-19 Cluster Tables

City & County of Honolulu

COVID-19 Clusters Under Investigation in Last 14 Days by Exposure Setting October 28, 2021

Exposure Category	Clusters (#)	Total Cases (#)	Cases Associated with Primary Setting (#)	Linked Cases Outside Primary Setting (#)		
Congregate Settings						
Correctional Facilities	2	368	342	26		
Educational Settings	0	0	0	0		
Shelters	0	0	0	0		
	Food Service, Production, and Distribution					
Bars & Nightclubs	0	0	0	0		
Food Suppliers	2	60	31	29		
Restaurants	0	0	0	0		
Occupational Settings						
Construction & Industrial	1	4	4	0		
Other Occupational Settings	0	0	0	0		
Travel, Lodging & Tourism	1	6	6	0		
Social and Recreational Activities						
Social Gatherings	0	0	0	0		
Places of Worship	0	0	0	0		
Gyms	0	0	0	0		
Other						
Other	0	0	0	0		

Maui County

COVID-19 Clusters Under Investigation in Last 14 Days by Exposure Setting

October 28, 2021

	Claratava	Total Cases	Cases Associated with	Limbod Coose Outoide		
Exposure Category	Clusters (#)	(#)	Primary Setting (#)	Linked Cases Outside Primary Setting (#)		
	(Congregate Setti	ngs			
Correctional Facilities	0	0	0	0		
Educational Settings	1	17	7	10		
Shelters	0	0	0	0		
	Food Servic	e, Production, ar	nd Distribution			
Bars & Nightclubs	0	0	0	0		
Food Suppliers	0	0	0	0		
Restaurants	O	0	0	0		
	O	ccupational Sett	ings			
Construction & Industrial	0	0	0	0		
Other Occupational Settings	2	16	8	8		
Travel, Lodging & Tourism	0	0	0	0		
	Social and Recreational Activities					
Social Gatherings	0	0	0	0		
Places of Worship	0	0	0	0		
Gyms	0	0	0	0		
Other						
Other	0	0	0	0		

Hawai'i County

COVID-19 Clusters Under Investigation in Last 14 Days by Exposure Setting October 28, 2021

Exposure Category	Clusters (#)	Total Cases (#)	Cases Associated with Primary Setting (#)	Linked Cases Outside Primary Setting (#)	
Congregate Settings					
Correctional Facilities	1	336	324	12	
Educational Settings	0	0	0	0	
Shelters	0	0	0	0	
	Food Service	e, Production, an	nd Distribution		
Bars & Nightclubs	0	0	0	0	
Food Suppliers	0	0	0	0	
Restaurants	0	0	0	0	
	O	ccupational Sett	ings		
Construction & Industrial	0	0	0	0	
Other Occupational Settings	0	0	0	0	
Travel, Lodging & Tourism	0	0	0	0	
Social and Recreational Activities					
Social Gatherings	1	13	10	3	
Places of Worship	1	22	21	1	
Gyms	0	0	0	0	
Other					
Other	0	0	0	0	

Kauai County

COVID-19 Clusters Under Investigation in Last 14 Days by Exposure Setting October 28, 2021

Exposure Category	Clusters (#)	Total Cases (#)	Cases Associated with Primary Setting (#)	Linked Cases Outside Primary Setting (#)	
Congregate Settings					
Correctional Facilities	0	0	0	0	
Educational Settings	0	0	0	0	
Shelters	0	0	0	0	
	Food Servic	e, Production, an	nd Distribution		
Bars & Nightclubs	0	0	0	0	
Food Suppliers	0	0	0	0	
Restaurants	0	0	0	0	
	O	occupational Sett	ings		
Construction & Industrial	0	0	0	0	
Other Occupational Settings	0	0	0	0	
Travel, Lodging & Tourism	o	0	0	0	
	Social (and Recreational	Activities		
Social Gatherings	1	4	4	0	
Places of Worship	0	0	0	0	
Gyms	o	0	0	0	
Other					
Other	0	0	0	0	